THE OPEN COURT

JANUARY

1934

Vol. 48 Number 928

THE OPEN COURT

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea.

FOUNDED BY EDWARD C. HEGELER

Vol. 48 JANUARY, 1934 No. 928

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Published Quarterly

THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY
149 EAST HURON STREET CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Subscription rates: $2.00 a year, 50c a copy. Remittances may be made by personal checks, drafts, post office or express money orders, payable to *The Open Court Publishing Company.*

While the editors welcome contributions, they do not hold themselves responsible for unsolicited manuscripts.

Address all correspondence to *The Open Court Publishing Company,* 149 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Entered as Second Class matter January, 1934, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois under Act of March 3, 1879.

THE GAME JIRIT AS PLAYED IN ITS HEYDAY

Frontispiece to The Open Court

THE OPEN COURT

Volume XLVIII (No. 1) January, 1934 Number 928

LINCOLN'S LOST CAUSE

BY EDWARD O. SISSON

CAN any discussion of Abraham Lincoln be timely today? The very world in which he lived and died has passed away; even the vision which he had of his country has vanished, and the America of his ardent dreams—"the last, best hope of man"—can never be. The tame and human 'capitalism' of which he had a friendly inkling has expanded into an ominous monster, quite as bitterly execrated by its enemies as the "Slave Power" of Lincoln's day. The very type of man he was, frontiersman, has passed away, there being no frontier. Yet Lincoln is still interesting: there is a great Lincoln play—written, it is true by a foreign hand; books still come from the press about him, some conventionally laudatory, some critical, hostile, even calumnious. Besides Lincoln stands alone among American figures in his universal human interest, having been vastly admired all around the world, by people to whom for the most part the issues of Lincoln's own time meant little or nothing. Is it possible that even with the stage so completely re-set and the very persons of the drama so diverse, the deeper elemental forces may be the same, and the final significance still vital? This is the view which inspires the following discussion and, we believe, is supported by it.

Because the discussion takes this view and undertakes to set forth qualities exhibited in the public career of Lincoln which support the view, it is proper to say in advance that it does not intend in any way to add to the Lincoln myth, nor even to justify him against certain charges which may be brought against him. He has been accused of opportunism; the very things praised here are cited by others to prove the charge. He was condemned in his own day as lukewarm in the cause of negro freedom; this is in a sense admitted here, even insisted upon. Far more serious is the charge still

made by some Southern writers, that Lincoln had it in his power to avert war and yet deliberately precipitated the War; even to this there is no rebuttal in this paper, although there are in it certain clues which might be followed up toward a possible defense. But the paper confines itself to a definite question and offers a definite answer to this question. Also it seeks to rest the case upon grounds the least open to controversy, mostly accepted historical facts, including extensive citation of Lincoln's own official utterances.

The specific issues of Lincoln's day, slavery and secession, have passed into history and concern us no more; it would seem that whatever enduring fame Lincoln enjoys must rest not upon these issues, but on something else, deeper, more basically human perhaps, more ultimate in its significance. These issues were both adjudicated by the victory of the North and the triumph of the party which Lincoln led, and in that victory Lincoln played a major role. But his supreme contribution was something quite other than these services of his as leader of the victorious party, and in the irony of fate this contribution was in the event rejected and brought to naught. What he did offer, in the briefest terms, was an ideal and a spirit, together with definite and concrete ways and means to embody the spirit and the ideal; his own utterances make it clear that he considered these things to be of supreme importance, not solely to his own country in its immediate crisis, but to all mankind and in all human affairs. All this is to say that Lincoln's enduring significance is bound up with a cause that was lost rather than with the causes that were victorious. It is this lost cause of Lincoln's and its significance that we here seek to exhibit.

In the great conflict between North and South there were two salient and obvious issues; the abolition of slavery, and the preservation of the Union. The grand visible drama revolved upon these, and these were both decided by arbitrament of war. Lincoln was, up to the moment of his assassination, the spokesman and the executive head of the political force which carried through the war and its settlement; even before his death slavery was, if not legally abolished, visibly doomed; and the Union, although still dismembered, was manifestly to be preserved—and as time showed, enormously strengthened. These then are the imposing aspects of the drama as played on the scene with battles, political movements, proclamations, and eventually constitutional transformations.

We come next to an emphatic negative—that neither of these great causes which were won was in any peculiar sense Lincoln's: in neither was he an originator or pioneer, but in both he was a follower where others had blazed the trail. Inasmuch as Lincoln is constantly hailed as Emancipator and Preserver of the Union, this will seem strange; he was the emancipator in the sense of having signed and issued, on his own official authority, the Emancipation Proclamation; and he was likewise supreme magistrate and commander-in-chief during the armed conflict and did in those capacities inexorably demand the submission of the revolting states and their return to the Union. But in both these causes, to use Napoleon's words, "his mind marched with millions of men," he was the symbol and executor of these causes but not their prophet or protagonist. Lincoln's own true causes, in which he played the role of leader and prophet, were quite other than these operations of abolition and of federal solidification; causes far less capable of dramatization, subtle, human, moral; causes which were lost and in which Lincoln was defeated, partly during his life and more tragically after his death, which canceled the last hope of success for these causes. We must then consider what Lincoln's position and function really were with respect to the two great issues which were won; for his own cause, which was lost, had to do with these huge historic causes, which were won.

First, Lincoln and slavery. Lincoln's attitude concerning slavery was quite clear and definite, but was complex, with the result that it was often misunderstood by both friends and opponents in his own day and is still seldom clearly understood. Yet it was really the attitude of the great mass of people in the North, and, strange as it may sound, of many if not most in the South. It was this attitude, shared by the mass of the North, which made it possible for him to be elected to the Presidency in 1860.

First, he "hated slavery"; it was utterly obnoxious to him and clashed with his dearest principles, both moral and political. He "thought it wrong"; and this when Christian churches, north as well as south, were busy proving that it was divinely ordained and plainly supported by the Bible. In his first office of any consequence, as member of the Illinois legislature at the age of 30, he recorded this view: when the legislature passed resolutions denouncing abolitionists and condoning slavery, Lincoln with one lone supporter read into the mintes a protest, joining in the condemnation of abolition-

ists, but declaring that "slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy." In 1854, in one of his earliest speeches of significance, he speaks of the "monstrous injustice of slavery." But in all this he might almost have been quoting Jefferson or even Washington speaking a generation earlier. The land was full, north and south, of people who disliked and disapproved slavery, with a smaller number who hated it intensely.

In the second place, Lincoln's political view concerning slavery and political program for dealing with it were clear cut and changed little, until the War changed everything. First, he was inexorably opposed to the extension of slavery; this view governed his political affiliations on all vital occasions. But he was also opposed to any aggressive interference with slavery in the states which legalized it; the constitutional provision concerning fugitive slaves which Phillips denounced as "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell," Lincoln regarded as a covenant with the slave-holding states which he was bound to respect. So he wrote to his friend Speed, a slaveholder, "I acknowledge your rights and my obligations under the Constitution in regard to your slaves." This compelled him to oppose the Abolitionists and condemn their program; and the Abolitionists in turn hated and denounced him.

The third point is of great importance, and not quite easy to describe; it was his utter incapacity to extend his hatred of slavery to a hating of the slave-holder, or even to denouncing him morally. It was his realistic sense of the actual institution of slavery as something historical, with a long background in the old world, and with deep economic and social roots in its strange last stand in the great American Republic. It was his persistent view that slave-holders, slaves, and opponents of slavery were all human and all caught in the mesh of events, all striving to live their lives in the midst of difficulties and perplexities and all entitled to humane and kindly consideration from their fellows in spite of differing opinions and conflicting programs and policies.

Lincoln never fell into the prevailing Northern fallacy of throwing the whole responsibility for the institution of slavery upon the South; he saw that the guilt, if guilt there were, rested upon the Nation as a whole, North as well as South. "It is no less true for having been often said," he writes in the Second Annual Message, "that the people of the South are not more responsible for the original introduction of this property than are the people of the North;

and when it is remembered how unhesitatingly we all use cotton and sugar and share in the profits of dealing in them, it may not be quite safe to say that the South has been more responsible than the North for its continuance."

These elements in Lincoln's attitude toward slavery were definitely fixed at the time of his first important public utterance on the subject, in his speech in answer to Douglas at Peoria in 1854. After denouncing slavery as wrong, and the Missouri Compromise as therefore also wrong, he goes on:

> Before proceeding, let me say that I think I have no prejudice against the Southern people. They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did not now exist among them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist among us, we should not instantly give it up.... When Southern people tell us they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery than we are, I acknowledge the fact.... If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do, as to the existing institution. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia.... But a moment's reflection would convince me, that whatever of high hope (as I think there is) there may be in this in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible.... I think I would not hold one in slavery, at any rate; yet the point is not clear enough for me to denounce people upon.

These are striking words, not by their violence but by their moderation. It is true they were uttered before the heat of the conflict, nearly seven years before the actual outbreak of the war; but the fact is that the fury and madness of the later period, before and during the armed conflict, never changed Lincoln's attitude. In 1858, debating with Douglas, in 1860, as candidate for the presidency, and through all his career as war ruler, he never shifted from his position: he was against slavery, would not compromise with its extension, yet insisted that the slave states should solve their own domestic problem; and he demurred to all self-righteous condemnation and all spirit of revenge.

Thus on the issue of slavery and emancipation Lincoln was emphatically a moderate, and so was unsatisfactory to both extremes. The abolitionists abhorred his patience with slavery and his support of the constitutional provision for fugitive slave laws; the slave party feared and hated him for his outspoken condemnation of slavery and his unyielding stand against its extension. As a moderate, on the

other hand, he was elected to the presidency and led the nation to both emancipation and the refounding of the Union.

So much for slavery and emancipation; next, what of Union? This question is, in and of itself, far simpler than that of slavery. The South claimed the right to secede; the predominant party in the North denied the right; Lincoln became, by one of the most amazing processes in history, the leader of a war to coerce the southern states back into the Union. It is true that Lincoln was an ardent believer in the Union and inflexibly resisted any sort of compromise or question on this point. It is also notorious that many influential voices in the North were raised from time to time demanding that the war should be averted, or when once begun, terminated, by the simple plan of letting the seceded states go their way and acknowledging the Confederacy as an independent nation. Greeley, for example, wrote in November of 1860, when secession was getting under way: "If the cotton States shall decide that they can do better out of the Union than in it, we insist on letting them go in peace. . . . whenever a considerable section of our Union shall deliberately resolve to go out, we shall resist all coercive measures designed to keep her in. We hope never to live in a republic whereof one section is pinned to the residue by bayonets."

To all this Lincoln refused to yield; in utterance and in action he made it clear that Union was the paramount issue and that slavery was secondary. Even when he issued the Emancipation Proclamation he justified it not on the issue of slavery itself, but on the military necessity of exhausting every means to win the war and preserve the nation. In this sense Lincoln was the "Savior of the Republic"; nor should we belittle in any way his profound and unvarying devotion to the Union. In the famous "Lost Speech," delivered in 1856, he is reported to have risen to an impassioned climax, crying out, "we will say to the Southern disunionists, we won't go out of the Union, and you shan't." If this is of questionable authenticity we find his view gravely and unequivocally put in his first Annual Message: "The Union must be preserved; and hence all indispensable means must be employed."

We may well pause here to consider the vast significance of this inflexible attitude of Lincoln with respect to the federal union and secession. Even an ardent admirer must feel the force of the question whether the fearful tragedy of the War might not have been averted by a more tolerant and conciliatory policy on the part of the

federal government—in other words, on Lincoln's part. Nor can it be denied that the apparent rigor of Lincoln's mind on the question of the Union is strikingly in contrast with his flexibility and conciliation in general. The story of events in Virginia—her reluctance to join the secession movement and apparent deep desire to preserve the Union—powerfully suggests the possibility of that great state becoming the bearer of conciliation from the Southern side to meet conciliation from the North. But Lincoln had, to paraphrase slightly Goldwin Smith's remark, "an obsession for the American Union," and at that point his flexibility vanished and adamantine fixity took its place. This, I must confess, seems to me the gravest question concerning Lincoln's part in the vast tragedy of the slavery conflict, a question still not adequately treated.

But still the Union was not his cause in any peculiar or individual manner; the doctrine of the "indissoluble union," of the perpetuity of the constitutional bond, and of the nation as supreme and indestructible, had long been familiar to the whole country. Hamilton and Marshall had cemented the legal fabric of the Union a generation before the war; Webster had clarified and illuminated the doctrine of indissolubility. A southern president, Andrew Jackson, had given sharp rebuke in his official capacity, to a southern impulse toward secession; Jackson's toast which so startled many of his fellow democrats, "Our Union: it must be preserved!" offers almost the very words of Lincoln's statement. Thus with respect to the Union, as with respect to emancipation, Lincoln was simply the natural and inevitable leader of the great mass of the northern people but was in no wise an originator or prophet.

If then these causes that were won in the war and its aftermath were not Lincoln's very own, what was his cause, that which was truly his and was lost? This is a far harder question to answer. The victorious causes are concrete, picturesque, dramatic; they fill the pages of American history for almost half a century and are so plain that the wayfaring man may read. Above all they were triumphant, and fame blows its trumpets for successful causes. The lost cause which should have been Lincoln's contribution to his day and generation is far less dramatic, far more subtle and was terribly vanquished; what wonder that it tends to slip through the fingers of historians? Yet it is utterly real and in no way mysterious or fanciful. Also this lost cause links up with an immense body of what we

know about Lincoln: it is more intimately bound up with his character and personality than is his more imposing official functioning.

This lost cause of Lincoln's naturally manifested itself in connection with the two great issues of the day: slavery was to be abolished; the Union was to be preserved and reconstructed; it was on the method and manner of these two gigantic tasks that Lincoln bent his mind and strove to make his own peculiar contribution. He wrought into concrete form a plan for emancipation and later a plan for reconstruction; he preached them in season and out, in messages to Congress, in Proclamations, in public addresses, in conferences with governors, congressmen, senators, cabinet officers, generals, and people in general. He pushed their execution to the limit of his constitutional powers and doubtless beyond it. In spite of misunderstanding, opposition, calumny, hatred, and partial defeat, he was still holding fast to hope of their realization when the assassin's bullet cut off his life and left events at the mercy of far other forces. In the event both plans were utterly defeated, and being defeated have left almost no mark in our minds and little upon history.

This is Lincoln's lost cause, or, if you will, his lost causes: it is one cause in that throughout a common spirit and attitude ruled both the concrete plans. Thus there was one spiritual lost cause and two lost causes in the realm of practical politics. For the adjudication of the spiritual cause we must look to the two concrete causes in their actual process and fate.

First, Lincoln's program for *emancipation*. To most people, north and south, emancipation was a word, and a word over which to fight. But few seem to have given attention to the question of how emancipation was to be accomplished, or what was to be done with the tremendous problems which must follow upon its heels, if accomplished. Lincoln had long thought about it in a practical way; in 1854 he frankly said: "If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do as to the existing institution." I know of no wiser utterance in the years preceding the war; it would have been well indeed if all political leaders had been so modest, or rather, so intelligent. In truth nobody north or south did know what to do with slavery; it would almost seem that the more extreme abolitionists, otherwise intelligent, really supposed that abolishing slavery would somehow abolish the millions of black men, women and children who were the slaves. Lincoln, on the contrary,

was deeply concerned as to the manner and method of emancipation; the problem occupied his mind greatly and appears over and over again in his public utterances. It appears in many of his state papers, letters and addresses; it is set forth in full in his second Annual Message to Congress of December 1, 1862, to my mind the greatest of all his state papers. Whoever would grasp Lincoln's mind on this great problem must read and re-read this message.

Lincoln's plan is commonly known as "compensated emancipation," but compensation is only one of the essential features of the proposal, and perhaps not the most important. Not less vital certainly is the provision for both initiative and control by the states holding the slaves, and the limitation of federal action to giving the invitation and contributing financial aid; considering the issue on which secession was most commonly justified this was politically most intelligent. Further, the actual freeing of the slaves was to be gradual, taking, if necessary, thirty-seven years, from 1863 to 1900. Nor does Lincoln forget the vast problem of the Negroes once freed; indeed it is pretty clear that it was this aspect of the situation which had for years perplexed him; he does advert to various possibilities—segregation in territory assigned for the purpose and transportation back to Africa, in particular. The main point is that his mind is grappling resolutely with the whole picture of the thing to be dealt with; this is the essence of intelligence.

In all his many utterances not a word is said even suggesting the general enfranchisement of the freed Negroes. How conservative his view was on this phase of the problem may be inferred from a letter in 1864 to the new Union governor of Louisiana: "I barely suggest for your private consideration, whether some of the colored people may be let in (to the franchise) as, for instance, the very intelligent, and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks....This is only a suggestion, not for the public, but to you alone." This, too, seems far more intelligent than what was actually done, with such disastrous consequences to both races in the South.

We may well revert now to Lincoln's own words, particularly the great Second Annual Message. He introduces the subject thus:

> Among the friends of the Union there is great diversity of sentiment and of policy in regard to slavery and the African race amongst us. Some would perpetuate slavery; some would abolish it suddenly, and without compensation; some would

abolish it gradually, and with compensation; some would remove the freed people from us, and some would retain them with us; and there are yet other minor diversities. Because of these diversities we waste much strength in struggles among ourselves.... These articles are intended to embody a plan of such mutual concessions. If the plan shall be adopted, it is assumed that emancipation will follow at least in several of the states.

As to the first article, the main points are: first, the emancipation; secondly, the length of time for consummating it —thirty-seven years; and thirdly, the compensation.

The emancipation will be unsatisfactory to the advocates of perpetual slavery; but the length of time should greatly mitigate their dissatisfaction. The time spares both races from the evils of sudden derangement—in fact, from the necessity of any derangement.... Another class will hail the prospect of emancipation, but will deprecate the length of time. They will feel that it gives too little to the now living slaves. But it really gives them much. It saves them from the vagrant destitution which must largely attend immediate emancipation in localities where their numbers are very great; and it gives the inspiring assurance that their posterity shall be free forever.

Next Lincoln points out the striking fact that such a plan would tend to shorten the duration of the war, perhaps even availing to lead the revolted states to make peace in order to seize the chance of compounding the loss which the ultimate freeing of the slaves would entail. He then discusses various aspects of the proposal, with relevant statistical data, and with consideration of many possible objections. He concludes with an appeal to the hearts of his audience, so unusual in a document of this nature that he apologizes for its tone:

Is it doubted, then, that the plan I propose, if adopted would shorten the war, and thus lessen its expenditure of money and blood? Is is doubted that it would restore the national authority and national prosperity, and perpetuate both indefinitely? Is it doubted that we here—Congress and executive—can secure its adoption? Will not the good people respond to a united and earnest appeal from us? Can we, can they, by any other means so certainly or so speedily assure these vital objects? We can succeed only by concert. It is not "Can any of us imagine better?" but "Can we all do better?" Object whatsoever is possible, still the question occurs, "Can we do better?"

Lincoln was thus facing the facts with regard to the freeing of the slaves and the abolition of the institution of slavery: although desiring that all men should be free, he saw intensely the huge problem of the millions of freed slaves; although the leader of the North, he could not forget the just claims of the South. So he labors in this great message to get his Northern audience, Congress, and the people, to see the facts as he does, and he beseeches them to lay aside hatred and prejudice and act before it is too late. He rises in his peroration to what may well be considered the highest pitch of his eloquence:

> The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is now, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.... We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.

These wise and just proposals of Lincoln met at first with no little approval, and the prospect of their realization seemed bright. Lincoln's special message in March of 1862 proposing a resolution on the subject was received favorably by Congress, and the resolution passed by large majorities in both houses. Better yet, Congress in April of the same year passed an act to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and this act included at least two of Lincoln's favorite principles— compensation and colonization. Yet in the final event all came to naught: emancipation, when it came, was necessarily a mere blanket decree, without any effective recognition of the practical and concrete aspects of the situation. Hate, fear, mutual animosity, and suspicion, not only between the two combatant peoples, but in the midst of both, brought to naught the carefully nurtured plan and exposed the outcome to passion and chance.

It is true that Lincoln never completely gave up his hopes: even as late as February of 1865, he laid before his Cabinet a plan to offer the Confederate government four hundred million dollars as purchase price for the slaves: but all except Seward were against it, and Lincoln sadly folded and laid away the draft of the proposal. Thus ended the first of Lincoln's "Lost Causes"; the black men were to be freed, but not in his "plain, peaceful, generous, just" way.

The other concrete lost cause was *Reconstruction*. Lincoln's policy and actions in this field are the most characteristic and striking of all his official career: yet they threw him into collision with the most powerful factions in the North and brought down upon his head the bitterest hatred and denunciation. These policies were precisely consonant with his unvarying view that slavery was a national and not a southern sin, and that the people of the seceded states were not traitors nor criminals but erring brethren. So when the armed conflict began to favor the Union side, and portions of the revolted area began to be occupied by Union troops, Lincoln promptly took steps to arthorize and encourage local Union elements to set up loyal state governments and reëstablish relations with the federal authority. Again we find him proposing a clear-cut plan for action, simple indeed, yet sufficient to open the way for the states concerned to get back into the Union. This plan, too, might well be called "plain, peaceful, generous, just." It was, as events proved, quite too generous.

Three short documents afford a clear and effective picture of the plan and of Lincoln's grounds for proposing it: the Proclamation in which it is officially announced, December 8, 1863; the last three or four pages of the Annual Message of the same date; and—a solemn and touching fact—his last public address, on April 11, 1865, two days after the surrender of Lee at Appomatox and three days before his assassination. This address explains and defends his reconstruction policy against the bitter attacks which were being made upon it. Of this address Stephenson well says, "It is the final statement of a policy toward helpless opponents—he refused to call them enemies—which among the conquerors of history is hardly, if ever, to be paralleled."

The "Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction" was indeed astoundingly liberal: it offered full amnesty to the people in the revolted states upon their taking an oath of allegiance to the United States—with certain limited exceptions, chiefly Confederate officers above the rank of colonel and former officials of the United States who had joined the rebellion. Most extreme of all is the provision for establishing new state governments: this may be done by loyal persons "not less than one-tenth in number of the votes cast....at the presidential election of....1860."

This Proclamation was Lincoln's supreme act politically, far surpassing the Emancipation Proclamation as a manifestation of his

own convictions and purposes. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued reluctantly, with great hesitation, and only after great public pressure in its favor. The Proclamation of Amnesty was made on his own sole initiative, without the shadow of doubt or hesitation. But emancipation succeeded, and amnesty failed, so emancipation is remembered, and the greater deed of amnesty is forgotten.

Two points mark the greatness of this action: first, as Stephenson well says, in it he "carried to its ultimate his assumption of war powers. No request was made for Congressional coöperation. The message which the Proclamation accompanied was informative only."[1] Second, the terms of the Proclamation were a flat defiance of the powerful radical faction in his own party. Moreover no pressure from the outside, no immediate aspect of events, impelled to this action, as had been the case with the Emancipation Proclamation: this stroke came from Lincoln's own mind and character. No wonder that Stephenson lists this episode under the title "Audacities."

When the Proclamation was issued Lincoln had already been for more than four months in correspondence with General Banks, military governor of Louisiana, concerning movements of loyal citizens of that state for a reconstructed state government; Banks was instructed and urged to foster such movements, under proper conditions. It was characteristic of Lincoln's mind that the logic of the Proclamation is definitely based upon the actual experience in Louisiana. Louisiana moved forward in the reorganization of its government, with the full recognition and support of the executive branch of the national government. The new state constitution abolished slavery and empowered the legislature to confer the franchise upon the freed men at its discretion, a remarkable manifestation of liberality, explained in part perhaps by the generosity of Lincoln toward the new state.

Here too, by good fortune, we have Lincoln's own words in his very last public utterance, an address made to a large crowd at the White House on the evening of April 11th, after the surrender of Lee on April 9th. He deals, with the utmost patience and good humor, with the conflict concerning his policy of welcome to the returning states, and particularly with the actual case of Louisiana: "Reconstruction," he says

> is fraught with great difficulty. . . . There is no authorized or-

[1] N. P. Stevenson: *Lincoln* p. 331.

gan for us to deal with.... We must simply begin with and mold from disorganized and discordant elements.... I am much censured for some supposed agency in setting up and seeking to sustain the new state government of Louisiana. In this I have done just so much as, and no more than, the public knows....

Still the question is not whether the Louisiana government, as it stands, is quite all that is desirable. The question is, Will it be wiser to take it as it is and help to improve it, or to reject and disperse it? Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new state government? Some 12,000 voters in the heretofore slave state of Louisiana have sworn allegiance to the Union, assumed to be the rightful political power of the state, held election, organized a state government, adopted a free-state constitution, giving the benefit of public schools equally to black and white, and empowering the legislature to confer the elective franchise upon the colored man. Their legislature has already voted to ratify the constitutional amendment recently passed by Congress, abolishing slavery throughout the Union. These 12,000 persons are thus fully committed to the Union and to perpetual freedom in the state—committed to the very things, and nearly all the things, the nation wants—and they ask the nation's recognition and its assistance to make good their committal."

He admits the tentative and imperfect nature of the new government, yet, he says with characteristic humor and sense, "Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only to what it should be as the egg is to the fowl, we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it."

But to the radical faction in Congress Lincoln's action was the signal for the bitterest opposition. They did what they could to smash the Louisiana egg by rejecting the representatives of the new Union state, they charged the President with usurping the prerogatives of Congress and violating his constitutional obligations. The bitterness of the vindictives, as Stephenson well calls them, against this wise and magnanimous policy of Lincoln is one of the ugliest episodes of our whole history. Its venomous quality is seen in the spectacle of at least two of these vindictives actually exulting over the murder of Lincoln.

Lincoln himself characteristically stood firm to the end: in that last address already referred to, he was still looking forward regarding the problem of reconstruction; he closed with these words:

In the present situation, it may be my duty to make some new

> announcement to the people of the South. I am considering, and shall not fail to act when satisfied that action will be proper.

Three days later his voice was silenced and his task fell to other hands. What followed was in the key of tragic irony: Lincoln was beloved in the North; his assassination inevitably aroused a storm of passion and vengeance which played into the hands of Lincoln's worst foes and wrecked the last hopes for the success of his plans. His just and generous proposals were swept into the discard, and in their stead came that dark and shameful episode known as the Reconstruction of the South. Thus were Lincoln's causes lost in his own day.

The same spirit gave form to both of these concrete plans: we may call it the spirit of intelligence and good-will: intelligence in that it seeks to reckon with facts, and with all the pertinent facts, in spite of bias and selfish interest; good-will, because it seeks to take all parties into account and recognize all just claims. This was the cause that was lost in both emancipation and reconstruction: we have called it Lincoln's cause, but of course it was the cause of the American people, Northern and Southern, and of the free and the slave; all suffered bitterly through its loss—Lincoln in a sense least of all, for fate snatched him from the scene before the denouement.

It is this greater, spiritual cause that makes Lincoln still live in the minds and hearts of men, far and wide—the universal human cause of intelligence and good-will. It is a mere truism to say that these are what we need today in every realm of life and affairs and throughout the world. It is doubtful if any man in great place ever strove more earnestly to exercise intelligence and good-will than did Lincoln. The intuition of mankind has so far sensed his eminence as to treasure his memory and magnify his fame; may it be that he living thus in the minds of men may yet share in the winning of the great cause which was lost in his own day?